

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Aquatic Resources
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

June 10, 2010

Board of Land
and Natural Resources
Honolulu, Hawaii

AN INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING ON THE APRIL 20, 2010 CLOSURE
OF THE STATE'S BOTTOMFISH FISHERY

At its meeting of April 8, 2010, the BLNR approved the closure of the bottomfish fishery; DLNR did this in coordination with the NOAA Fisheries intention to do the same by April 20th. NOAA Fisheries regulates the take of bottomfish annually, by monitoring for an annual total catch limit. The total annual catch (TAC) for the 2009-10 fishing year was 254,050 pounds.

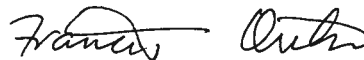
The closure to the bottomfish fishing in both state and federal waters occurred on April 20, 2010. Reported catch totals are about 208,000 lbs. (82% of the TAC). NOAA officials rely on cumulative landings data and extrapolate this accumulation over time to estimate the closure date for the TAC. For the two previous fishing years, the TAC was exceeded by around 10%.

In the process of establishing this year's closure date, the data at the time suggested that by early April, the TAC was rapidly approaching or could have been already reached, depending upon the method used in estimating the date for the TAC. Based on the discussion by NOAA, WESPAC and DAR, and the administrative deadlines for both state and federal agencies required to inform the public, the April 20 date was selected for closure. By March 31, 2010, the total catch was reported at 85% of the TAC.

After the closure, it was discovered that a computer error resulted in duplicating catch amounts in the January and February totals (which were used in computing the TAC closure date). This overestimate was then used in the discussion, resulting in the April 20, 2010 closure date.

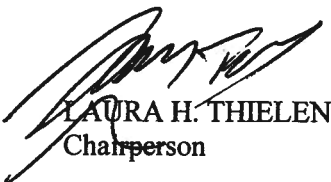
This computer error has since been fixed. However, total catches of bottomfish could have been higher, and closer to 254,050 pounds. The final total is 208,000 pounds or 82% of the TAC. NOAA Fisheries have implemented quality control measures so that duplicating fishing data is avoided; these measures are expected to make estimating the TAC closure date more accurate.

Respectfully submitted,



FRANCIS OISHI, Program Manager
Division of Aquatic Resources

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson